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RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0037

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001574

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA  
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EFIN](#) [KCOR](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: EFCC DEMARCHE DELIVERED TO WAZIRI

REF: A. STATE 84635  
[1](#)B. ABUJA 1465  
[1](#)C. ABUJA 1331

Classified By: A/DCM Walter Pflaumer for reasons 1.4. (b & d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Charge delivered reftel demarche to Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairwoman Farida Waziri on August 8. Waziri called the USG position "unfortunate" and maintained that much of the issue with USG concerns is perception. She expressed concern for how cases were handled under Ribadu and claimed (as did the Attorney General in yesterday's meeting - see septel) that Ribadu had fed "all sorts of stories" to Washington officials. She maintained that her record in three months was actually impressive and included several high profile cases. She promised to provide Charge a list of all redeployed police staff, their positions and who had received training. Waziri told Charge she will not travel to Washington in September, in light of our demarche. She stressed several times that her commitment is to the EFCC as an institution and that she will do her "best no matter what." Our concerns were communicated strongly and appeared to be clearly received. We will watch closely Waziri's actions in response to our points. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge, accompanied by A/PolCouns, delivered Ref A demarche points to EFCC Chairwoman Farida Waziri on August 8. Waziri called the USG position "unfortunate" and stressed (as she has done previously) that we should not believe what we read in the newspapers (Ref. B). Waziri lamented that there is always resistance to change and that no one should be considered indispensable. She claimed, as did Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa on August 7 (septel), that Ribadu had been "jetting to the U.S." and "feeding all sorts of stories" to Washington officials. She asked that the USG support the EFCC as an institution, regardless of the leadership, but indicated "its okay, I will do my best no matter what." Waziri told Charge she is "bent on succeeding, especially because of all the things that have been said." Waziri told Charge that AG Aondoakaa briefed President Yar'Adua following Charge's meeting on August 7.

[1](#)3. (C) Waziri told Charge that corruption is "destroying Nigeria" and that she recognized this. Waziri maintained that much of the issue with regard to USG concerns is perception. Ribadu, she noted, was a young person who worked extensively with the media. Waziri maintained that in her first three months at the EFCC plenty of high profile cases have moved forward, including: the Police Equipment Fund arrests (Ref. C), the arraignment of former Ministers of Aviation (Ref. C), the arrest of former Plateau Governor Michael Botmang (arraigned July 18), the arrest of former

Adamawa Governor Bonnie Haruna (arrested July 31) and the August 7 arrest of former Military Governor of Ondo State, former head of the Nigerian Ports Authority and immediate past Deputy National Chairman of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) Bode George. George's arrest in particular, Waziri said, would not have been carried out by the EFCC under Ribadu's leadership. (Note: Waziri was not in the office on August 7. She told Charge she stayed home to rest as she had been on the phone all night long receiving calls about George's arrest and had to personally oversee the entire process to make sure it was handled correctly. End Note.) Waziri maintained that cases under Ribadu were not handled according to the rule of law, indicating it is "easy to prosecute if you don't follow the rule of law." For example, she noted that she had discovered after taking office that former Bauchi State Governor Adamu Muazu, on whom the EFCC built a case under Ribadu, had never even been invited for questioning.

¶4. (C) Charge raised USG concerns regarding redeployment of large numbers of EFCC staff, some of whom were trained by the USG and had closely collaborated on USG investigations. Waziri told Charge that only 12 of the redeployed officers (Ref. C) were investigative staff and that the remaining 100 plus were from four squadrons that provided security to the EFCC building and personnel. She told Charge that she had even decided to keep some disloyal employees because of their high level of expertise. She offered to provide a list of all those redeployed, the positions in which they had served, and who among them had received training. Waziri lamented the difficulty of being a third world country, maintaining that world powers interfere in personnel changes in third world countries but that no one would imagine interfering in USG or UK personnel appointments. Charge stressed that the USG concerns are for the EFCC as an institution and its capacity to do its job effectively, as well as the implication that had on the GON's commitment to fight corruption.

¶5. (C) Charge made a pointed comment that the USG is concerned that certain known corrupt former officials maintain a high level of influence in the GON. Waziri started twice to say, "I'm not aware..."; however, she then changed the direction of her comment and noted that despite statements more than two years ago that charges were going to be brought against a large group of corrupt former governors, there are still no prosecutions. She said she is pushing to bring new cases to court. Regarding those already in court, she lamented that the former governors are still free to enjoy the spoils of their corruption while the cases drag on. Waziri pointed to draft legislation presented to the House Committee on Financial Crimes which would allow for forfeiture of property obtained through corruption for even sitting government officials. Waziri told Charge she should make her points about the Administration as a whole, beyond the EFCC, to the President.

¶6. (C) In response to demarche point that we do not believe high level meetings in the U.S. would be constructive or useful until the EFCC can take positive steps to rebuild its reputation, Waziri told Charge she will not travel to the U.S. in September, indicating she may travel to France instead.

¶7. (C) Comment. Waziri seemed genuinely concerned by the demarche points and reiterated several times that her commitment is to a strong EFCC. We made clear that the burden is on her to demonstrate both her intentions and her ability to make progress against corruption. We will be watching Waziri's actions in the coming months. End Comment. PIASCIK